

Regional AGENDA

METROPOLITAN KING COUNTY COUNCIL

Sept-Oct 2000

The Metropolitan King County Council will hold four public hearings on the 2001 budget, in addition to taking testimony via the Internet.

Evening hearings are set for 7 p.m. on the following dates:

Tuesday, Oct. 17
Regional Justice Center
401 Fourth Ave N., Kent

Wednesday, Oct. 18
Sunny Hills Elementary
3200 Iss-Pine Lake Rd.
Sammamish

Tuesday, Oct. 24
Woodinville High School
19819 136th Ave. N.E.,
Woodinville

Wednesday, Oct. 25
Council Chambers
10th floor, King County
Courthouse
516 Third Ave., Seattle

For online testimony, visit the council's website at www.metrokc.gov/mkcc, and look for links to the budget information starting Oct. 23.

Public input on budget more important than ever *Council begins financial deliberations Oct. 16*

The council is gearing up for one of the most difficult tasks it faces every year – adopting the King County budget.

Starting in mid-October and lasting through November, the council suspends most other work to focus exclusively on fiscal matters. It's never easy, but in recent years the challenges have increased.

"Money is tight and decisions are hard," said Councilmember Rob McKenna, chair of the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee. "Despite a strong economy, the demands on the county budget have grown in areas such as criminal justice, transportation and human services.

"That is why we have made a conscious effort to dig deep into the core issues driving the budget, such as overhead, technology costs and employee benefits," said McKenna. "Because there is so much demand for revenues, we may be looking at big cuts."

While the council's first concern is developing a fiscally responsible budget, members also want to maintain critical county services.

"It is our duty to provide the services King County residents need for healthy families and safe communities," said Councilmember Greg Nickels, chair of the Capital Budget Subcommittee. "We cannot balance the budget on the backs of the people who need our help the most."

As budget subcommittee chairs, Nickels and Councilmember Jane Hague will take the lead in the early stages of reviewing the executive's proposed budget and developing the council's final version.

Their subcommittees will serve as panels focused on particular issues and themes. In each panel, work will be organized so it looks at broad policy implications in one session, and specific department/agency needs in a second session.

Continued on Page 5.....



Councilmembers Greg Nickels (left), Rob McKenna (right), and Jane Hague will lead the council through the process of adopting the 2001 King County budget.

Metropolitan King County Council • Room 1200 King County Courthouse • 516 Third Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104-3272

District 1	Maggi Fimia	206-296-1001	District 6	Rob McKenna	206-296-1006	District 11	Jane Hague	206-296-1011
District 2	Cynthia Sullivan	206-296-1002	District 7	Pete von Reichbauer	206-296-1007	District 12	David Irons	206-296-1012
District 3	Louise Miller	206-296-1003	District 8	Greg Nickels	206-296-1008	District 13	Chris Vance	206-296-1013
District 4	Larry Phillips	206-296-1004	District 9	Kent Pullen	206-296-1009	General Phone		206-296-1000
District 5	Dwight Pelz	206-296-1005	District 10	Larry Gossett	206-296-1010	TTY / TDD		206-296-1024

"The swap will allow the park to be developed much faster than originally planned without any additional cost to the county."
- David Irons

Council approves Section 36 land swap agreement

Plans for a regional park atop the Sammamish Plateau have been speeded up a bit thanks to a land swap agreement between King County and the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District

A 628-acre park in the middle of the plateau has been a long-time dream for King County. In 1993, the county acquired the last 628-acre section of land on the plateau that is untouched by development. A master plan for the Section 36 Park is expected to come before the council in the next six months.

The land swap gives the water district a more suitable spot for new water tanks to supply the growing plateau population, while the county gains a new partner in turning Section 36 into a park.

"This measure is a 'win-win' for everyone involved," said Councilmember David Irons, who represents the area. "The swap will allow the park to be developed much faster than originally planned without any additional cost to the county."

On one side of the swap is a heavily wooded 6.43-acre parcel owned by the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District that is home to old conifer trees, wetlands and streams. On the other side is a 6.43-acre tract that is logged over alder with limited sensitive areas. The water district will receive the cleared site for the construction of two 4-million-gallon water tanks to serve residents on the plateau and the wooded parcel will become part of the county's new park. In addition, the district will utilize \$1.7 million in cost savings that would have originally been spent to clear and develop the property.

"This partnership between the county and the district demonstrates how regional cooperation benefits the community," said Councilmember Larry Phillips, Natural Resources, Parks & Open Space Committee chairman. "By working together, county residents will realize a greater return on their investment in the regional Section 36 Park, and much sooner as well."

The master plan now being drafted will set aside the majority of land as natural zones and buffers for wildlife and sensitive areas. Approximately 80 acres will be developed for active recreation with ballfields, play areas and a trail system connecting the park with local neighborhoods. The improvements to be made by the water district will include a trailhead, trail facilities, a short access road and a 24-stall parking lot. The district will also be required to provide landscaping to screen the new water tanks.

"Residents of the county, park and recreation advocates, and friends of the environment all stand to benefit by this exchange," said Phillips.



The parcel King County received in the land swap is heavily wooded and will enhance the natural beauty of the Section 36 Park.

Advanced training and support to fight domestic violence

Law enforcement personnel, who investigate domestic violence and sexual assault allegations, now have access to advanced training that will lead to enhanced services and support for victims.

In September, the county council unanimously approved an ordinance to improve the criminal justice system's response to violence against women.

"Women, as well as their children, are too often victims of domestic violence," said Councilmember Kent Pullen. "This legislation will provide important funding to help law enforcement personnel protect the most vulnerable victims."

The funds are coming to the King County Department of Judicial Administration through a federal

STOP (Services * Training * Officers * Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Formula Grant. The STOP program promotes a coordinated approach by law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, victim advocates and service providers to ensure victim safety and offender accountability.

The STOP Formula Grants are awarded to local governments which show a comprehensive commitment to the coordination and integration of government agencies working together toward:

- 25 percent of the funds to law enforcement
- 25 percent of the funds to prosecution
- 25 percent of the funds to victim services, and
- 25 percent at grantee's discretion under established parameters.

County supports new artistic season on the stage and in school

The King County Council has again planted the seeds for another season of artistic performances that run the gamut from chamber music in Fall City to jazz in Tukwila.

Using revenues from hotel-motel taxes, the council has approved grants to fund a wide variety of performances, classroom projects, and heritage-awareness activities. "We have a vibrant artistic community here in King County," said Councilmember Larry Gossett, whose central-Seattle district is home to a wide assortment of arts organizations. "These grants makes it possible for the artists to take many excellent cultural performances and projects out into the community."

Over the summer, the council set aside \$100,000 to fund the King County Performance Network for the 2000-2001 season and support the Community Arts Initiative. It will fund more than 75 events in communities throughout the county. "Before we started these programs, artistic performances were mainly concentrated in Seattle and offered only by the larger organizations," said Councilmember Louise Miller. "This program has allowed us to reach out to suburban and rural communities, and it's been a motivator in creating more local arts groups."

The Performance Network underwrites the appearance of major dance, music and theater artists in outlying areas. Local arts agencies receive \$5,000 grants and then cover other expenses through ticket sales, fundraising and volunteer labor. "The primary goal of the Performance Network is to provide quality arts programming in close-to-home venues," said Councilmember Greg Nickels. "But it also creates new audiences for our established artists. Last year, we brought the Seattle Symphony to the Snoqualmie Valley – and it was standing room only."

In September, the council approved funding for the cultural education program, including 69 arts projects and 13 heritage projects. All of these projects benefit school children. They range from developing a maritime history curriculum at Ballard High School to carving cedar posts in the Snoqualmie Tribal style at Snoqualmie Middle School. In many cases, local arts organizations and historical societies are co-sponsoring the activities.

"This partnership between the King County Arts Commission, the Landmarks and Heritage Commission and local arts agencies has been one of our most successful ventures as a regional government," said Councilmember Larry Phillips.

Fimia helps teens in northend gain a new voice

Young people in north King County have a new outlet for speaking up about the issues that most affect them.

A youth council for the Shoreline/Lake Forest Park area has finally come into being, almost a full year since the idea for the group was first proposed.

"Youth now have the opportunity to recognize the power of their own voice, and to take on the responsibility needed to benefit fellow young people in their communities," said Councilmember Maggi Fimia, one of the sponsors of the youth council.

The 11 teenagers who were elected in July have been heavily involved in the planning of this new council. Although the council board was intended to include 21 teen members and seven adult members, the excitement has not diminished with the initial small showing. Currently the youth are in the process of recruiting new members in the hope to bring the board count up to the expected size.

This continued effort is being made possible with the help and funding of the Shoreline/South County Family YMCA and Fimia. The councilmember has pledged a \$20,000 grant that will be used for staff support, leadership training and a youth summit for the teens through the YMCA. The Shoreline School District has also been of great help, donating a meeting space to the council and the leadership of Supt. Marlene Holayter.

In addition to learning how to present and argue issues important to today's young people to organizations such as the city and county council, the school board, and the chamber of commerce, the youth council board offers teens an even more important skill, the skill of leadership. Training sessions and workshops to build such leadership skills, self-awareness, and self-empowerment are central to the mission and goal of the council.

If you know a teenager who would be interested in serving on the board, call Fimia's office at (206) 296-1001.



*Puyallup carver
Shaun Peterson
works with students
on Mercer Island.*

Partnership to save salmon solidifies as recovery plan moves forward

Restoring King County's salmon populations continues to be a critical concern for the county council, as members work with other regional partners to comply with new federal rules and regulations.



Councilmember Louise Miller (right) checks out the salmon run in a local creek with a county biologist.

In March of 1999, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) listed the chinook (also known as King) salmon as a "threatened" species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This listing requires that Washington State and local governments band together to determine how to increase salmon runs and protect the health of the environment.

The state and counties were given a little over a year to produce a series of plans that detail the steps they will take to restore the health of the chinook runs.

If the federal government considers the plans to be acceptable, the state and local governments will be able to continue applying local environmental policies that protect fish.

"We need more than regulations and enforcement," said Councilmember Louise Miller, who is on the executive board of the tri-county effort developing the salmon recovery plan. "We need projects geared toward specific salmon habitat areas, and we need to begin plugging away at those projects as soon as we can."

Miller said there have been two goals in developing a response plan. The first was to restore the salmon runs and sustain those runs in the future. The second goal is compliance with the federal act that allows people to continue to live and work in this region.

As part of the tri-county effort, King County joined with cities around the region to develop a plan tailored to each watershed.

"King County and neighboring cities share common interests in salmon recovery and conservation," said Councilmember Larry Phillips, chair of the Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space Committee. "Now, we have a chance to work together for habitat protection, water quality, and flood control projects that make a difference."

Phillips said the county and suburban cities have reached an agreement in principle to provide regional funding for watershed protection and habitat improvements. "The time for talking is past," said Phillips. Now we must wisely use the \$2 million we have agreed to spend to effectively save salmon, reduce flooding and improve water quality in the region."

He said the agreement will help regional municipal partners develop and articulate salmon habitat conservation measures when seeking funding from state or federal legislators.

"Given the historical and monumental efforts we have undertaken to protect our environment and landscape, it would be remarkable if for some reason we are unable to protect the Northwest salmon from extinction," said Phillips.

Councilmember Larry Phillips participates in the Salmon Homecoming Celebration.



"...it would be remarkable if for some reason we are unable to protect the Northwest salmon from extinction."

-Larry Phillips

Voters to see transit issue on November ballot

King County voters will have the final say at the polls in November on whether to raise the sales tax by two-tenths of a percent to maintain – and possibly enhance – local bus service.

The county council voted last month to place a measure on the November ballot asking voters to increase the sales tax to fund Metro service.

If voters approve the two-tenths measure, the

new tax revenues would support operation, maintenance and capital needs of Metro public transit. The projected revenue from the two-tenths increase is approximately \$80 million annually. They money would be used to offset revenues lost by the reduction of the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax.

The cost to taxpayers would be about 2 cents on every \$10 purchase.

Council recognizes outstanding service from key advisors

The county council recently honored more than 200 of its top advisors – the citizens who sit on dozens of county boards and commissions.

At a September 18th reception, the council recognized the outstanding volunteer service performed by members of King County boards and commissions. Representatives from the 58 county boards or commissions attended this special event which was held at Benaroya Hall.

Featured as the keynote speaker for this event was Barbara Hedges, director of athletics for the University of Washington. Her inspirational speech covered the challenges and rewards of public service.

It was a fitting message for the people who fill important roles on a wide variety of advisory boards, from the arts commission to the veterans board.

“Elected leaders may have to make the tough decisions, but we are backed up by our citizens; citizens who volunteer their time and talent on county boards or commissions,” said Council Chairman Pete von Reichbauer. “They are helping us create one of the most

forward-thinking regions in the nation.”

For more information about serving on a King County boards or commission, or to inquire about vacancies or openings, contact Rick Ybarra in the King County Executive’s office at (206) 296-4006.



Councilmember Cynthia Sullivan (center) met with local citizens who serve on boards and commissions that advise the county on civil rights issues.

University of Washington Athletic Director Barbara Hedges (front row, center) was the keynote speaker at the reception. Later, she was thanked by (counter-clockwise from lower left) councilmembers Maggi Fimia, Pete von Reichbauer, Larry Phillips and Larry Gossett.



CTV offers call-in shows

King County Civic Television now hosts live call-in shows dealing with local issues for community residents.

Reaching as many as 300,000 homes in the Seattle/King county area, these “talk/call in” shows will be a helpful resource in the future. The debut show aired Aug. 24, when CTV partnered with the King County Public Health to present an informative discussion on septic systems.

Upcoming shows are being planned around the topics of disaster readiness and pet care.

Budget continued from Page 1.....

After each respective panel’s review and deliberations, its recommendations will be presented to the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee. The BFM Committee, which consists of all councilmembers during budget season, will reconcile the budget based upon panel recommendations and public input.

“Public involvement really does count,” said Hague. “When the decisions are this tough, we need to hear from people about their priorities. We also want to make the public feel they are getting value for their tax dollars.”

Hague said the council has worked hard to increase accessibility to the budget process through public hearings in the community, Internet information, and online testimony.

“We want to make it as easy as possible for our citizens to put their stamp on this budget,” she said.

Council acts to keep sheriff's storefronts open

The council voted in September to keep community policing storefront offices open through the end of the year, after cutbacks in the King County Sheriff's budget threatened to close the highly effective facilities.

Approximately \$125,000 was specifically earmarked for the storefronts in the mid-year supplemental budget adopted by the council.

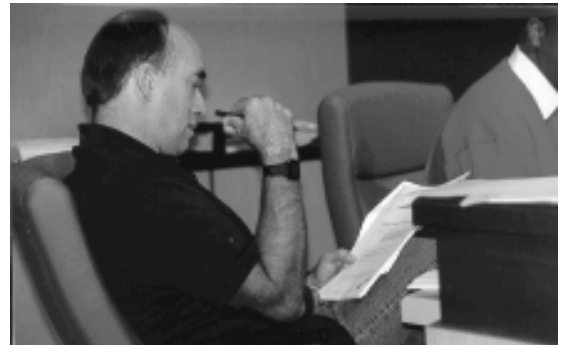
"Neighborhoods have come to depend on these storefront offices and have built a relationship of trust with the officers who staff them," said Councilmember Dwight Pelz. "Having specific officers assigned to particular communities creates a partnership that becomes a very effective crime-fighting tool."

On Sept. 1, the sheriff pulled many officers out of the storefronts to cover regular patrols and reduce overtime costs. That decision impacted the operating hours of four to five storefronts – including the busy offices located in Boulevard Park and Fairwood.

In addition to funding the storefronts, a new method was approved for the sheriff to more directly recover overtime payments from contract cities. That could help pay for overtime without impacting other operations.

Councilmember Greg Nickels, who chairs one of the budget subcommittees, said he was glad money could be found to keep the storefronts operating through the end of the year, but the fight is not over yet.

"It is important to find a long-term solution to funding the operation of the storefronts," said Nickels. "We need to sit down during the upcoming 2001 budget process and discuss how important these are to the communities, and then we must find a way to protect the storefronts becoming a political football in budget wars."



Councilmember Dwight Pelz fought to get additional funding for the sheriff's community storefront offices.

E-payments coming online

E-payments, or the ability to complete payments for county services with credit cards or other electronic payments methods, is expanding for King County residents.

The council recently passed legislation that allows county agencies to accept credit cards, debit cards and wire transfers for such things as animal licensing, court fines, transit passes, or birth certificates.

"We want to make King County government as accessible as possible for county residents," said Councilmember Jane Hague. "Citizens should be able to access services online,

instead of standing in line. This is another step toward e-commerce."

In 1997, the state Legislature gave county treasurers the authority to accept electronic payment for municipal services. Since then, several King County agencies accept in-person credit card payments. The council's vote opens the door for broader use.

"There will be some major issues to consider concerning the cost of doing business in this manner, and creating a system that is secure for both the county and its customers," said Councilmember David Irons. "But this is an idea that could push county government even further into the 21st Century."

One last chance to testify on comp plan

Last month, the council's Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee wrapped up six months of review and revisions of the King County Comprehensive Plan. This is the first major update of the plan since 1994.

The Comprehensive Plan update is one of the most significant legislative items to come before the council this year. The process began in March with the transmittal of proposed policy and code amendments by the executive.

Since that time, the GMUA committee chaired by Cynthia Sullivan has: completed an in-depth review of the executive's proposal; incorporated changes suggested by the council, staff and public; and checked to make sure proposed changes are in line with other county policies and regulations.

"This has been an exhaustive process," said Sullivan. "In the end, the changes should be seamless because the plan we adopted in 1994 was very solid, plus we've done a good job of keeping up with smaller changes over the past six years."

The council will now hold a public hearing on

Monday, Nov. 13, on the plan and associated development regulations. The full council is anticipated to review the GMUA Committee's recommendation on both policy and code amendments and take final action on the amendments by the end of the year.

"The amended version of the plan carries out the same goals and direction we established years ago in order to curb sprawl and encourage economic development in King County," said Sullivan.

For more information, or to testify online, check out the council's website at: http://www.metrokc.gov/mkcc/Comp_Plan/.

Councilmember Cynthia Sullivan has chaired this year's update of the Comprehensive Plan. Her committee held an all-day session on Saturday, Sept. 16 to finalize the update.



Stricter monitoring on use of county vehicles

Alarmed by reports that top managers are using county cars to commute to and from work, Metropolitan King County Councilmember Rob McKenna recently promised to take a fresh look at the rules that govern the use of county vehicles by employees.

"Since 1990, we have twice audited this area and found disturbing trends," said McKenna, chair of the council's Budget and Fiscal Management Committee.

McKenna said that such use is very questionable when compared to county laws adopted in 1993 and updated in 1995. These laws allow county employees to be assigned a vehicle for emergency response, if they are called out during off-hours at least 12 times per quarter.

The sheriff's office has a separate program that allows police officers to use patrol cars for commuting as a way of increasing public safety on the roads and in neighborhoods.

"The car-per-officer program is different," said McKenna. "I don't think the average citizen is going to feel safer or more protected knowing a building inspector or park manager has a county car in the neighborhood."

McKenna has asked that all of the vehicle assignments be re-examined to make sure they are legal under both county and state law.

What we're doing...



The Georgian National Singing and Dancing Ensemble recognized

The Metropolitan King County Council recognized cast members of the musical spectacular The Legend of Tamar, which features the country of Georgia's National Singing and Dancing Ensemble. Pictured with cast members are Producer Jim Lowe (center, holding proclamation), Council Chairman Pete von Reichbauer, Councilmember Louise Miller and Councilmember Larry Phillips.



Mariners Care Foundation honored

The Metropolitan King County Council honored members of the Mariners Baseball Club for the team's many charitable contributions to the community through the Mariners Care Foundation. On hand for the recognition were (from left): Mariners CEO Howard Lincoln, the Mariner Moose, Council Chairman Pete von Reichbauer, catcher Dan Wilson, Councilmember Larry Gossett, and Mariners President Chuck Armstrong.

The information in this newsletter is available in alternate format upon request. Alternate format includes braille, large print, and/or audio. For more information, please call 296-0360, or TDD/TTY at 296-1024.

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